

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 11, 29-35, 43-46, 48-50, 52, 53, 71-77, 85, 87, 89, and 91 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by French et al., U.S. Patent 6,282,658; rejected claims 5, 9, 12-15, 16-20, 23-28, 36-39, 51, 54-62, 65-70, 78-81, 86, 88, 90, and 92 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable in view of French et al.; and rejected claims 21, 22, 40-42, 63, 64, 82-84 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable in view of French et al. and Messing, U.S. Patent 6,745,327. Claim 47 does not appear to be listed in the text of the Office Action, but claims 1-92 are all listed as rejected in the summary of the Office Action.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 16, 29, 36, 43, 58, 71, 78, and 85-92. Claims 1-92 remain pending.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's prior art rejections based upon French et al. and Messing. The currently pending claims patentably distinguish the references cited by the Examiner.

Independent claim 1, for example, recites a method for issuing a digital certificate for a user on a network. That method includes the step of linking a physical address of a user to an electronic account of the user and thereby enabling the user to receive information sent to the electronic account at the physical address or enabling the user to receive information sent to the physical address in the electronic account. The method further includes the steps of receiving a request for a digital certificate for the user, generating the digital certificate for the user, and linking the digital certificate to the electronic account of the user.

As stated on page 10 of the application, linking a customer's electronic address to the customer's physical address, as recited in claim 1, ensures flexible and secure

communication. The digital certificate, also linked to the electronic account, enhances this security. Enhanced security will in turn enhance the flexibility of the linked electronic account allowing a greater range of services and communication channels.

In contrast to claim 1, French et al. and Messing fail to disclose at least providing a digital certificate to a user having an electronic account linked to a physical address.

French et al., according to the title, disclose a system and method for authentication of network users. A digital certificate 902 contains a set of fields including user identification (col. 16, lines 15-20). During preprocessing for the digital certificate, the user supplies identification information such as an address (col. 6, lines 15-24). Preprocessing may include a set of validation checks including address validation (col. 8, lines 50-55). French et al. thus disclose address collection and address validation, but fail to disclose linking a user's electronic account with the user's physical address.

Messing, according to the title, discloses an electronic certificate signature program. A digital certificate is issued to a computer user after a personal identity verification (abstract). The user supplied data may include a photograph, a public key, a retinal scan, finger prints, or a handwriting sample (figure 1 and col. 6, lines 8-14). Messing however fails to disclose or suggest linking an electronic account to a physical address.

Therefore, neither French et al. nor Messing anticipate or render obvious the subject matter of claim 1.

The remaining independent claims, though of different scope than claim 1, all relate to methods or apparatuses for issuing a digital certificate or processing a request

for a digital certificate. Along with the digital certificate, these claims also recite an electronic account of a user lined to the physical address of the user. Therefore, these claims are patentable over the prior art cited by the Examiner for at least the same reasons as claim 1 as well as for the subject matter recited in those claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of pending claims 1-92.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: September 15, 2005

By:


Michael R. Kelly
Reg. No. 33,921